

Message Text

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ACTION FSI-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 /030 W

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R 191040Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7744

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0920

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AFSI OTRA MR SS MO

SUBJECT: SENIOR SEMINAR CASE STUDY TRAVEL: A.L. SELIGMANN

REF: (A) STATE 34437, (B) NOUAKCHOTT 362, (C) NOUAKCHOTT 363

1. AS NOUAKCHOTT REPORTING INDICATES, AIR TRAVEL POSSIBILITIES IN REGION BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIMITED. ONE ASSUMES, HOWEVER, THAT WITH THE USE OF INTERMEDIATE STOPS, SELIGMANN WILL BE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT ALL THREE CAPITALS ON HIS ITINERARY ALTHOUGH IT MAY PROVE TO BE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN FORESEEN.

2. WE DO NOT WISH TO RULE OUT ENTIRELY THE POSSIBILITY OF TRAVEL TO GOM-CONTROLLED PARTS OF THE SAHARA, BUT AT THIS POINT WE WOULD NOT ENCOURAGE SELIGMANN TO INCLUDE THEM ON HIS ITINERARY. SECURITY IS ONE FACTOR. WHILE SITUATION IN EL-AYOUN IS PRESENTLY STABLE, THERE IS GROWING TENSION IN THE AREA AS CLASHES MOUNT IN SCALE. TRAVEL OF MISSION OFFICERS IN SAHARA TO DATE HAS BEEN RARE AND ONLY UNDER VERY CONTROLLED CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IN PART DUE TO FACT THAT AREA STILL UNDER TRIPARTITE CONTROL --WHICH WILL NO LONGER BE THE CASE AFTER FEB. 29 -- BUT GIVEN CONTINUING INTERNATIONAL CLAMOR OVER LEGAL ASPECTS MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN SOVEREIGNTY, WE WILL WANT EVEN THEN TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE. THE PRESENCE IN EL-AYOUN OF A SENIOR U.S. STATE DEPT. OFFICIAL UNDER POLITICALLY CHARGED CIRCUMSTANCES LIKELY TO BE MISINTERPRETED BY BOTH THE MOROCCANS AND ANY FOREIGN

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PRESS WHO DETECT HIS PRESENCE. NONE OF THIS IS MEANT TO PREJUDICE

POSSIBILITY OF TRAVEL IN MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED AREAS, WHICH
EMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT, OF COURSE, IN BEST POSITION OF JUDGE.

3. ON PRACTICAL SIDE, NO CIVIL AIR TRANSPORTATION EXISTS
BETWEEN DAKHLA AND EL-AYOUN AND GOM MILITARY FLIGHTS WOULD NOT
ORDINARILY BE AVAILABLE FOR USE BY USG PERSONNEL. LOCAL TRAVEL
AGENT INFORMS US THAT CASA-EL-AYOUN AIR LINK IS UNDEPENDABLE AT
BEST, AND IS SUBJECT TO LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION. ALGIERS-CASA
CONNECTION BECOMING INCREASINGLY SPOTTY, AS TUNISIAN, LIBYAN,
AND SYRIAN LINES HAVE UNOFFICIALLY DISCONTINUED AIR SERVICE. AS
OF FEB. 18, ONLY SAUDI AIR FLYING BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES.
SELIGMANN MAY WISH TO CONSIDER REVISING ITINERARY ALONG FOLLOWING
LINES: ALGIERS-MADRID-CASA-RABAT-CASA-NOUAKCHOTT; OR CASA-RABAT-
CASA-NOUAKCHOTT-MADRID-ALGIERS.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE BEING APPRISED OF ANY REVISIONS, SO THAT
WE MIGHT PLAN ACCORDINGLY.
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